

OLD PASTURES  
PADRAIC COLUM

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## TO THE READER.

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# OLD PASTURES

THE POETRY OF PADRAIC COLUM

CREATURES

DRAMATIC LEGENDS AND OTHER POEMS

WILD EARTH AND OTHER POEMS

OLD PASTURES

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# OLD PASTURES



PADRAIC COLUM

*New York*  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
1930

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SET UP AND PRINTED. PUBLISHED OCTOBER, 1930.

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IN MEMORY OF MY BROTHER

F. H. C.

YOU WHO MADE NO CLAIMS AND GAVE NO DENIALS, SOL-  
DIER AND SAILOR WHO COULD HAVE BEEN COMPANION  
OF MEN WHO CARRIED THE EAGLES



## NOTE

As I go through this collection I note that many of the pieces in it have originals in other languages: "At the Fore of the Year" is derived from an Irish traditional song; "A Man Bereaved" and "Queen Gormlai" are derived one from a Scottish Gaelic and the other from an Irish mediaeval poem; "Branding the Foals" is a reminiscence of a Latin epigram. Then there are the pieces that make the little collection "Hawaii." The heroic character and history of the Kanaka-Maori people rather than their soft charm appealed to me and so I put first in this collection a piece about the emblem of their warriors—the lehua blossom: it imitates but does not translate an Hawaiian poem. The second piece is a translation, but it is of a little popular song which was evidently made under European influence—the refrain means "From the cold." The third is a translation: it is *mele inoa* or name-song, belonging to a type which is made to introduce a character and a name. The fifth is a translation of a famous poem, "Mele Ahiahi," or Evening Song: it should be noted that the word *tapu* has a more extended meaning than the one which we have imposed in *taboo*—it means "consecrated," or "belonging to the gods."

And to *The Dial*, *The Commonweal*, *The New Republic*, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, *The Irish Statesman*, *Scribner's Magazine*, *The Chapbook*, *Harper's Bazaar*, I wish to return thanks for the permissions to republish several of the pieces that are given in this book.

PADRAIC COLUM.

New York, August, 1930.



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# OLD PASTURES



## DUBLIN ROADS

When you were a lad that lacked a trade,  
Oh, many's the thing you'd see on the way  
From Kill-o'-the-Grange to Ballybrack,  
And from Cabinteely down into Bray,  
When you walked these roads the whole of a day.

High walls there would be to the left and right,  
With ivies growing across their top,  
And a briary ditch on the other side,  
And a place where a quiet goat might crop,  
And a wayside bench where a man could stop.

A hen that had found a thing in her sleep,  
One would think, the way she went craw-craw-cree,  
You would hear as you sat on the bench was there,  
And a cock that thought he crew mightily,  
And all the stir of the world would be

A cart that went creaking along the road,  
And another cart that kept coming a-near;  
A man breaking stones; for bits of the day  
One stroke and another would come to you clear,  
And then no more from that stone-breaker.

And his day went by as the clouds went by,  
As hammer in hand he sat alone,  
Breaking the mendings of the road;  
The dazzles up from the stones were thrown,  
When, after the rain, the sun down-shone.

And you'd leave him there, that stone-breaker,  
And you'd wonder who came to see what was done  
By him in a day, or a month, or a week:  
He broke a stone and another one,  
And you left him there and you travelled on.

A quiet road! You would get to know  
The briars and stones along by the way;  
A dozen times you'd see last year's nest;  
A peacock's cry, a pigeon astray  
Would be marks enough to set on a day;

Or the basket-carriers you would meet—  
A man and a woman—they were a pair!  
The women going beside his heel:  
A straight-walking man with a streak of him bare,  
And eyes that would give you a crafty stare.

Coming down from the hills they'd have ferns to sell,  
Going up from the strand, they'd have cockles in stock:  
Sand in their baskets from the sea,  
Or clay that was stripped from a hillside rock—  
A pair that had often stood in the dock!

Or a man that played on a tin-whistle:  
He looked as he'd taken a scarecrow's rig;  
Playing and playing as though his mind  
Could do nothing else but go to a jig,  
And no one around him, little or big.

And you'd meet no man else until you came  
Where you could look down upon the sedge,  
And watch the Dargle water flow,  
And men smoke pipes on the bridge's ledge,  
While a robin sang by the haws in a hedge.

Or no bird sang, and the bird-catchers  
Would have talk enough for a battle gained,  
When they came from the field and stood by the bridge,  
Taking shelter beside it while it rained,  
While the bird new-caught huddled and strained

In this cage or that, a linnet or finch,  
And the points it had were declared and surmised:  
And this one's tail was spread out, and there  
Two little half-moons, the marks that were prized;  
And you looked well on the bird assized!

Then men would go by with a rick of hay  
Piled on a cart; with them you would be  
Walking beside the piled-up load:  
It would seem as it left the horses free,  
They went with such stride and so heartily

And so you'd go back along the road.

On a sudden he feels  
That boon that brings him  
The meadow-slope,  
With the young calves,  
And his own delight—  
The woodbine scent!

He hears, but heeds not  
The fiddle within;  
He is back in mornings  
When cuckoos called:  
Then this old man  
From the porch goes in.

A girl who comes  
Feels the fragrance here,  
And, ere she raises  
The latch that brings her  
To join the dance,  
Her hand has lifted—  
The moon-coloured spray,  
The foam-coloured spray  
Are at her breast,  
With the scent of that  
Which bides by the house  
So long, so close,—  
The hedgerow-thing!

## LILAC BLOSSOMS

We mark the playing-time of sun and rain,  
Until the rain too heavily upon us  
Leans, and the sun stamps down upon our lustres,  
And then our trees stand in their greennesses  
No different from the privets in the hedges,  
And we who made a pleasaunce at the door-step,  
And, whether by the ash-heap or the spring-well  
Growing, were ever fresh and ever radiant,  
And fragrant more than grass is—  
We, we are gone without a word that praised us—  
You did not know how short the playing-time!

## BRIAR BLOSSOMS

What of the rose's  
Rere-relations,  
The briar-blossoms  
Growing like shreds  
Of linen bleaching  
On wide green leaves—  
One, then a hundred  
Coming unnoted—  
Scentless blossoms?

Us, the briars,  
The aboriginals;  
Outside the pales  
Of gardens trailing,  
Beside down-tumbled  
Barns bearing  
Untended blossoms?  
You who would know us  
Yourselves humble!

## AT THE FORE OF THE YEAR

At the fore of the year, and on Candlemas Day,  
All early at Mass I remarked her—  
Like the dew on green corn, as bright and as clear  
Were her eyes, and her voice was the starling's!

With bragging and lies, I thought that her mind  
I'd engage, and then win her with praises,  
But through Spring and through Summer she has left me  
to rise

Every day with a pain that will slay me!

O come, O my love, ere the life from me goes  
If your hand but to lightly lay on me,  
And a grief take away that none else can remove—  
For now 'tis the reaping of barley!

## A MAN BEREAVED

My wife and my comrade  
Will not come at all  
Though the pine-tree shall flourish,  
The green rush grow tall,  
And its cone to the ground  
The larch-tree let fall.

She'll not cross this threshold,  
Nor with me abide,  
Sit down on this door-step,  
Nor lie by my side;  
And I'll not hear her sounding  
Songs over the din,  
Where the people are crowded,  
The harvest being in,  
Nor see her come lilting  
From the field or the fold,  
Nor plaiting her long locks  
In the young moon nor old.

No more to the hill-tops  
Have I heart to go,  
Nor to walk through the woods  
When the summer sun's low:  
Though I weary with delving,  
With driving the plough,  
I lie on a bed  
Sleep has gone from now.

Though goats to their time come  
With nobody there;  
Though the watched heifer calve  
With none to take care,  
From the church-yard my woman  
Home never will fare.

My house is encumbered,  
Unswept my hearth-stone,  
The cows low for their milking  
In the full height of noon.  
No garb is made newly,  
No wool is yet spun;  
On the floor and untended  
Stands the youngling, my son.

On the hills they cry ba-ba,  
And bring back their dam;  
On the floor and unanswered  
Stands the youngling, my lamb,  
While I'm saying over  
That she'll not come at all  
Though the pine-tree shall flourish,  
The green rush grow tall,  
And its cone to the ground  
The larch-tree let fall!

## QUEEN GORMLAI

Not fingers that e'er felt  
Fine things within their hold  
Drew needless in and through,  
And smoothed out the fold,  
And put the hodden patch  
Upon the patch of grey—  
Unseemly is the garb  
That's for my back to-day!

O skinflint woman, Mor,  
Who knows that I speak true—  
I had women once,  
A queen's retinue;  
And they were ones who knew  
The raiment of a queen;  
Their thoughts were on my tire,  
Their minds were on my mien!

Light of hand and apt,  
And companionable,  
Seven score women, Mor,  
I had at my call,  
Who am to-day begrudged  
The blink of candle-light  
To put it on, the garb  
That leaves me misbedight.

I wore a blue Norse hood  
The time I watched the turns

Though goats to their time come  
With nobody there;  
Though the watched heifer calve  
With none to take care,  
From the church-yard my woman  
Home never will fare.

My house is encumbered,  
Unswapt my hearth-stone,  
The cows low for their milking  
In the full height of noon.  
No garb is made newly,  
No wool is yet spun;  
On the floor and untended  
Stands the youngling, my son.

On the hills they cry ba-ba,  
And bring back their dam;  
On the floor and unanswered  
Stands the youngling, my lamb,  
While I'm saying over  
That she'll not come at all  
Though the pine-tree shall flourish,  
The green rush grow tall,  
And its cone to the ground  
The larch-tree let fall!

## THE TIN-WHISTLE PLAYER

'Tis long since, long since, since I heard  
A tin-whistle played,  
And heard the tunes, the ha'penny tunes  
That nobody made!

The tunes that were before Cendfind  
And Cir went Ireland's rounds—  
That were before the surety  
That strings have given sounds!

And now is standing in the mist,  
And jigging backward there,  
Shrilling with fingers and with breath,  
A tin-whistle player!

He has hare's eyes, a long face rimmed  
Around with badger-grey;  
Aimless, like cries of mountain birds,  
The tunes he has to play—

The tunes that are for stretches bare,  
And men whose lives are lone—  
And I had seen that face of his  
Sculptured on cross of stone,  
That long face, in a place of graves  
With nettles overgrown.

## A MOUNTAINEER

Ere Beowulf's song  
Was heard from the ships,  
Ere Roland had set  
The horn to his lips:

In Ogham strokes  
A name was writ:  
That name his name  
Lives in yet.

The strokes on the edge  
Of the stone might count  
The acres he has  
On this bare mount;

But he remembers  
The pillar-stone,  
And knows that he is  
Of the seed of Conn.

## BREFFNE CAOINE

Not as a woman of the English weeping over a lord of the  
English

Do I weep—

A cry that scarcely stirs the heart!

I lament as it is in my blood to lament—

Castle and stronghold are broken,

And the sovereign of the land beside the lake lies dead—

Mahon O'Reilly!

In his day the English were broken:

I weep beside Loch Sheelin, and the day is long and grey!

## AT CASHEL

Above me stand, worn from their ancient use  
The King's, the Bishop's, and the Warrior's house,  
Quiet as folds upon a grassy knoll:  
Stark-grey they stand, wall joined to ancient wall,  
Chapel, and Castle, and Cathedral.

It is not they are old, but stone by stone  
Into another lifetime they have grown,  
The life of memories an old man has:  
They dream upon what things have come to pass,  
And know that stones grow friendly with the grass.

The name has crumbled—CASHEL that has come  
From conqueror-challenging CASTELLUM—  
Walls in a name! No citadel is here,  
Now as a fane the empty walls uprear  
Where green and greener grass spreads far and near!

## SONG OF STARLINGS

We've watched the starlings flocking past the statues  
That we have often seen in other cities—  
Hope, Justice, Commerce—and have heard them sing  
Unvarying songs that are their memories—  
Memories of winds that they've been blown by,  
And rivers bordered with their beds of sedges,  
And level lands on which are empty folds.  
Daylight dims, and we  
May not return to where a lamp  
Beams, making a room familiar, and a wife  
Tells of the children's doings: we hear the starlings  
As we have heard them often in other cities,  
Around other cupolas, along other cornices,  
In sunless parks bunched on the tops of trees,  
And see around us bleak, monotonous fields  
Our hearts must ever hold—theirs are these songs—  
These are the songs that most touch us exiles!

## THE CONDORS IN THE JARDIN DES PLANTES

To sink into the depths we need take weights—  
Put on such armour as our divers use;  
To rise above the fathomed we must bear  
Weights, and you are weighted for emprise  
Of rising to where flows the thinnest air,  
And here beneath our towers you roost and run,  
And trail your wings. I think I know your pain,  
Your pain and weariness!  
Like divers are ye that perpetually,  
Plated in metal, make circuit about  
Where some sidereal gesture has withdrawn  
The tides, the main—  
Condors with shuttered, iron-heavy wings!

## THE BAT

In broad daylight  
He should not be:  
Yet toward and froward,  
Froward and toward  
He weaves a flight.  
Who will guide him back to his cave,  
A little bat astray,  
Where he 'll rest on the breast of night,  
Away from day's bright miscreation?  
The linnet throbs through the air,  
The magpie coquettes with day,  
The rook caws "Time to be gone,"  
And travels on;  
While toward and froward,  
Froward and toward,  
The bat, a fathom  
Of flight, weaves.

## BLADES

Sojourner, set down  
Your skimming wheel;  
Nothing is sharp  
That we have of steel:  
Nothing has edge—  
Oh, whirl around  
Your wheel of stone  
Till our blades be ground!

Harshly, quickly, under blades  
Hafted with horn and wood and bone  
Went the wheel:  
Narrow long knives that should be one edge,  
House-knives that sliced the loaf to the heel,  
And scraped scales off mackerel,  
And weighty knives that were shaped like a wedge—  
Stone wakened keenness in their steel:  
Knives with which besom-makers pare  
Their heather-stalks, and hawkers' blades  
Used by men of a dozen trades;  
Broad-bladed knives that cut bacon-sides,  
And stumpy knives for cobblers' hides,  
With hunters' knives that were thinned with wear—  
All were brought to,  
All were laid on,  
All were ground by  
The Sojourner's wheel.

And those who filled the market-square  
Saw hand and eye upon their ware

That were well-schooled and scrupulous  
To spend upon that task their use.  
But sparks came from the eyes and met  
The sparks that were from edges whet,  
As eagerly and wittingly  
The dullness of each blade scoured he,  
And the brow he bent was like a stone.

Over the grinding-stone he sang,  
“The dalesman’s sword shall make you fear,  
And the dirk in the grasp of the mountaineer,  
And likewise the pirate’s blue cutlass  
Who have left your blades long edgeless!”  
But the men were thinking of games of cards,  
And the looks of the boys were turned towards  
The corner where they played pitch-and-toss  
And the women thought of the herring across  
The tongs to roast where pot-hooks hang.  
“Unready and unforward men  
Who have no right to any lien  
On the gifts of Tubal Cain,  
The gifts of our father, Tubal Cain!”

But no one drew meaning from the song,  
As he made an equal edge along  
One side of a blade and the other one,  
And polished the surface till it shone.

“Now leave a blessing on what you have done.”

“For what I have done I take my fee,  
But no blessing I leave on it,” said he,

“Everybody knows,  
Everybody knows  
That the knife-grinder  
No blessing bestows.”

Then the market-place, with wheel a-pack  
He left, and the men to their cards went back  
And talked of a bird in the cocker’s loft;  
And of liming linnets beside the croft  
And boys told between pitch and toss;  
And the women laid the herring across  
The tongs to roast for a sloven’s meal.

And he went out beside the peel  
Tower, and through Saint Selskar’s Gate,  
Heading at a hearty rate  
Towards the hilltops and the shades.

And three who brought back sharpened blades  
To their fathers’ stalls by the Tan-yard Side,  
And then stayed while a blackbird cried  
Quietly by their groundsills—  
The butcher’s daughter,  
The cobbler’s daughter,  
The hawker’s daughter,  
Were lost on the hills!

## THE LANDING

The great ship lantern-girdled,  
The tender standing by;  
The waning stars cloud-shrouded,  
The land that we descry!

That pale land is our homeland,  
And we are bound therefor;  
On her lawns and in her coppice  
No birds as yet make stir.

But birds are flying round us,  
The white birds of the sea—  
It is the breeze of morning,  
This that comes hummingly.

And like the talk that comes from  
A room where a babe is born—  
Such clearness and such mystery  
Are in words said on the morn,

Where, like a nation cloven,  
In two our ranks divide:  
One half on the high ship's bulwark,  
One half by the tender's side;

Where, like a people sundered,  
Who yet have each other's hail,  
Faces look down from the bulwarks,  
And look up from the tender's rail;

And names are called and spoken—  
“Nancy,” “Mary,” “Owen!”  
“Good-bye, and keep your promise!”  
“Farewell to you, my son!”

They are more spirit-stirring  
Than any words that are  
Remembered from the spokesman  
Of any avatar!

“Oh, all I had to tell you!”  
“Ellen,” “Michael,” “Joan”—  
“Good-bye, and God be with you!”  
“And can it be you’re gone!”

The great ship lantern-girdled,  
Her engines thresh, immerse—  
The great ship that had station  
Takes motion for her course.

Her little course the tender,  
Our little ship, goes on—  
The stars they are fast-waning,  
But we’ll land ere ’tis the dawn!

Green, greener grows the foreland  
Across the slate-dark sea,  
And I’ll see faces, places  
That have been dreams to me!

## BRANDING THE FOALS

Why do I look for fire to brand these foals?  
What do I need, when all within is fire?  
And lo, she comes, carrying the lighted coals  
And branding-tool—she who is my desire!  
What need have I for what is in her hands,  
If I lay hand upon a hide it brands,  
And grass, and trees, and shadows, all are fire!

## IMITATION OF A WELSH POEM

And that was when the chevaldour  
Through the whole of night  
Sang, for the moon of mid-July  
Made the hillside bright.

Morfydd to David ap Gwillam spoke  
When the song they did not hear,  
“Something is drawing through the fern,  
A living thing comes near.”

’Twas not the wolf, ’twas not the deer  
That came with pause and bound;  
A creature stood above the pair—  
Ap Gwillam’s Irish hound—

And knew them then, and knew them there  
Where the pine branches wave,  
As close beside, as deep in earth,  
As lone as in a grave!

## SCANDERBEG

She sat on the wall and dangled her silk-stockinged legs,  
Saying, "I will not have them all stung for any old man  
who is dead,"

So I went where the nettles were rank and came on a  
stone that read,

"Matthew de Renzi,  
Knight, born in Germany,  
Descended from George Castriot, alias Scanderbeg,  
Who fifty-two battles waged with conquest against the  
Great Turk."

More: the Knight de Renzi,  
Learned in Irish, composed for it a Dictionary,  
Corresponded with men of state upon affairs,  
And died here; fifty-seven his years—  
Peace be with Matthew!

Then I looked where she sat on the wall dangling her  
silk-stockened legs,  
Which she would not have stung for any old man who  
was dead,

As she said—

Not even, I supposed, for a descendant of Scanderbeg!

But I heard a curlew

Over the river beside me, the Shannon it was,  
And saw from that to the Danube, and it was crossed  
By turbaned men under whose stallions' hooves the grass  
Never grew again;

And that battlefield, the Plain of the Blackbirds, Kossovo,  
And the Sultan Murad slain,  
And the breach in Constantinople's wall, and Belgrade,

Buda and Vienna under great cannonade,  
And the sweep of the Pashas onward till Hungary, Poland,  
the Germanies were all dismayed,  
And that historyless man, George Castriot, holding at bay  
Byzantium's conquerors in the mountains of Albania;  
Then battles along the Rhine,  
And Dutchmen and English, Frenchmen and Irish, forcing  
or holding this line,  
And the Shannon crossed and Aughrim lost to our own  
overthrow!  
Two hundred years' battling in Europe at the name of  
Scanderbeg  
Spun through my mind as a curlew cried overhead!

## ON TWO SISTERS WHOSE DEATHS WERE TOGETHER

In woods remote, hid in the mountain hollows,  
Doves there are that have a gentler beauty,  
Doves that are marked as by a poet's image,  
And hence are called Doves of the Wounded Heart.

And such ye were, and we could never learn the  
Call that would bring you to our breasts, our hands!  
And such ye were, and ye were aliens in our  
Barnyard-world—Doves of the Wounded Heart!

You who were proud no storm had ever turned your  
Flight, and you who were her cherished one—  
May ye have found, hid in their mountain hollows,  
Your woods remote, Doves of the Wounded Heart!

## IN MEMORY OF JOHN BUTLER YEATS

“To-night,” you said, “to-night, all Ireland round  
The curlews call.” The dinner-talk went on,  
And I knew what you heard and what you saw,  
That left you for a little while withdrawn—  
The lonely land, the lonely-crying birds!

    Your words, your breath is gone!  
O uncaught spirit, we'll remember you  
By those remote and ever-flying birds  
Adown the Shannon's reach, or crying through  
The mist between Clew Bay and Dublin Bay!

## ODYSSEUS

(In Memory of Arthur Griffith)

You had the prose of logic and of scorn,  
And words to sledge an iron argument,  
And yet you could draw down the outland birds  
To perch beside the ravens of your thought—  
The dreams whereby a people challenges  
Its dooms, its bounds. In ungrown days we knew you,  
In ungrown days we heard you, and we heard  
Amongst boys' and old men's voices  
A man's full voice. The hillsides knew you too,  
The deep sea knew you, where you'd swim of mornings,  
And we would call you by a kindly name.

And by that name I'd speak to you, and say:  
"You were the one who knew  
What sacred resistance is in men  
That are almost broken; how, from resistance used,  
A strength is born, a stormy, bright-eyed strength,  
Like Homer's Iris, messenger of the gods,  
Coming before the ships the enemy  
Has flung the fire upon. Our own, our native strength  
You mustered up." But I will never say it,  
Walking beside you, or looking on you,  
With your strong brow, and chin was like a targe,  
And eyes that were so kindly of us all.

And sorrow comes as on that August day,  
With our ship cleaving through the seas for home,  
And that news coming sparkling through the air,

That you were dead, and that we'd never see you  
Looking upon the state that you had builded.

The news that came was like that weight of waters  
Poured on our hopes! Our navies yet unbuilt,  
Our city left inglorious on its site,  
Our fields uncleared, and over  
Our ancient house the ancient curse of war!  
And could we pray, touching the island-homeland,  
Other than this: "Odysseus, you who laboured  
So long upon the barren outer sea;  
Odysseus, Odysseus, you who made  
The plan that drove the wasters from the house,  
And bent the bow that none could bend but you:  
Be with us still:  
Your memory be the watcher in our house,  
Your memory be the flame upon our hills."

# FIRST EAST TO WEST ATLANTIC FLIERS

## I

A soldier, not of Fortune, but of some  
Idea laboured by philosophers:  
A soldier always, though there's monk in him,  
And poet also: watch how he salutes  
The anthem, or the ensign, or the line  
Of marching men: his upraised hand, his eyes  
Salute a drill, salute a chivalry:  
Frederick of Prussia, Frederick Barbaross!

## II

Something that's like the fabulous content  
In whales or hippopotami is in him,  
This small-eyed man of ample girth who stands  
Square, a steersman! Vision must become  
Readiness, wakefulness, and unfailing craft  
To burst through longitudes, to beat the winds,  
And fogs and squalls make light of! This is he  
Who fronts a course the arc-Atlantic wide!

## III

Jaunty and gamey, like a lad that's in  
A ballad that they sing in Kerry fairs,  
One joins himself unto the two are here,  
And he is of the breed of those who were  
Soldiers of Fortune born, that were wont  
To put all skill and spirit in a charge—  
The men who followed where the Wild Geese went:  
Fortune still counts, and with him she will be!

## BRENDAN

On the third day from this (Saint Brendan said)  
I will be where no wind that filled a sail  
Has ever been, and it blew high or low:  
For from this home-creek, from this body's close  
I shall put forth: make ready, you, to go  
With what remains to Cluan Hy-many,  
For there my resurrection I'd have be.

But you will know how hard they'll strive to hold  
This body o' me, and hold it for the place  
Where I was bred, they say, and born and reared.  
For they would have my resurrection here,  
So that my sanctity might be matter shared  
By every mother's child the tribeland polled  
Who lived and died and mixed into the mould.

So you will have to use all canniness  
To bring this body to its burial  
When in your hands I leave what goes in clay:  
The wagon that our goods are carried in—  
Have it yoked up between the night and day,  
And when the breath is from my body gone,  
Bear body out, the wagon lay it on;

And cover it with gear that's taken hence—  
"The goods of Brendan is what's here," you'll say  
To those who'll halt you; they will pass you then:  
Tinkers and tailors, soldiers, farmers, smiths,  
You'll leave beside their doors—all those thwart men  
For whom my virtue was a legacy  
That they would profit in, each a degree—

As though it were indeed some chalice, staff;  
Crozier, or casket, that they might come to,  
And show to those who chanced upon the way,  
And have, not knowing how the work was done  
In scrolls and figures and in bright inlay:  
Whence came the gold and silver that they prize,  
The blue enamels and the torquoises!

I, Brendan, had a name came from the sea—  
I was the first who sailed the outer main,  
And past all forelands and all fastnesses!  
I passed the voiceless anchorites, their isles,  
Saw the ice-palaces upon the seas,  
Mentioned Christ's name to men cut off from men,  
Heard the whales snort, and saw the Kraken!

And on a wide-branched, green, and glistening tree  
Beheld the birds that had been angels erst:  
Between the earth and heaven 'twas theirs to wing:  
Fallen from High they were, but they had still  
Music of Heaven's Court: I heard them sing:  
Even now that island of the unbeached coast  
I see, and hear that white, resplendent host!

For this they'd have my burial in this place,  
Their hillside, and my resurrection be  
Out of the mould that they with me would share.  
But I have chosen Cluan for my ground—  
A happy place! Some grace came to me there:  
And you, as you go towards it, to men say,  
Should any ask you on that long highway:

“Brendan is here who had great saints for friends:  
Ita, who reared him on a mother’s knee,  
Enda, who from his fastness blessed his sail:  
Then Brighid, she who had the flaming heart,  
And Colum-cille, prime of all the Gael;  
Gildas of Britain, wisest child of light.”  
And saying this, drive through the falling night.

## HAWAII

### I

Not in a grove where each tree loses its presence, not singly, do Lehua trees grow; they are Lehua trees only when they grow as I saw them growing at Kapaho, on Hawaii.

When I had seen them before they were mingled with other trees, or they grew singly, a tree here and a tree there: looking upon them I had marvelled that the poets of Hawaii had emblemized their warriors as Lehua trees.

But in Kapaho, on Hawaii, they stand upon lava rock and upon lava crust; some like mighty champions, like Kamehameha, like Umi, stand upon high places, upon mounds and rocks of lava. All stand in ranks as if all the warriors of the Eight Islands stood spear-ready upon that lava waste.

With branches from the ground they grow. From top to bottom the blossoms show themselves—not blossoms but the precious ornaments the warrior decks himself with.

The blossoms show themselves amongst the leaves; they are like scarlet birds, the lost i-i-wi birds, come back to hide and show themselves in the trees beloved of Hiiaka.

They stand upon the lava waste, upon black rocks and amongst black shingles; rank upon rank they grow, like warriors standing erect in the red glow of the volcano.

I saw your lava-mounting trees, and I marvelled no more that your poets had emblemized your warriors as Lehua trees.

. . . They have departed, the warriors whom these trees  
emblemmed. Honey for the birds of Heaven, wreaths of red  
for girls to deck their lovers with—these your Lehua trees  
still bring out of your fire-formed rock, Hawaii.

## II

I call on you, beloved—  
Breast so cold, so cold!  
Oh, so cold, I have to say  
*I ku anu e!*

How very cold the wind is,  
How very cold the dew—  
Bodies all a-shiver say  
*I ku anu e!*

What if this we do  
Against wind, cold, and dew—  
Put arms around each other?  
Just so that we need not say  
*I ku anu e!*

## III

From afar it has come, that long rolling wave; from Tahiti  
it has come; long has it been coming, that wide-sweeping  
wave: since the time of Wakea it has been on the way.

Now it plumes, now it ruffles itself. Stand upon your surf-  
board with the sun to lead you on! Stand! Gird your loin-  
cloth! The wave rolls and swells higher, the wave that  
will not break bears you along.

From afar it has come, that long-rolling wave; long has it been coming, that wide-sweeping wave. And now it bears you towards us, upright upon your board.

The wave-ridden waves dash upon the island; the deep-sea coral is swept in-shore; the long-rolling wave, the wide-sweeping wave comes on.

Glossy is your skin and undrenched; the wave-feathers fan the triumphing surf-rider; with the speed of the white tropic-bird you come to us.

We have seen the surf at Puna; we have seen a triumphing surf-rider: Na-i-he is his name.

#### IV

The old back-turning world had passed him by,  
The world that left Columbus in his chains,  
And Belisarius begging from his curb,  
And Clown Grimaldi weeping lonely tears!  
But he knew not these names that mean to us  
Fortune's wheel turned: his Columbus sailed  
Up the Pacific in canoes were hollowed  
In Hawaiki with the greenstone axes,  
In Hawaiki in the old, lost days.

I found him once, old game-cock on the roost,  
Watching with shuttered eye, and had him take me  
Where Laka was not—  
Laka the goddess of the green-branched altar,

Where he was master of a dance was merely  
Bellies like millstones turning; yet he sat there  
Like some great virtuoso who's once more  
Before his audience; he wore the ilima wreath,  
And from the ipu, from the gourd he rattled,  
Came sounds as strange as echoes—  
Came sounds like echoes from Hawaiian caves . . .  
. . . Far, far, far within the dance is for the King,  
The wreaths are smelling like an isle of flowers,  
And like an isle of sea-birds rising up,  
The dancers move, and he is there, the Master!

The crocus-yellow ilima grows beside  
His grave: 'tis where canoes once sailed  
For Bolotua and the Southern Seas;  
His house is overgrown—that quiet house  
That had an old man sleeping on its mats.

## V

The sign is given; mighty the sign: *Tapu!*  
All murmurs now, speech, voice  
Subdue: inviolable let evening be.

Inviolable and consecrate:  
Edgeways and staggering descends  
The sun; rain vanishes;  
A bonus of bright light comes back.  
Hawaii keeps the ordinance: *Tapu!*  
Even far Tahiti now is still, perhaps.

The Island's shelter-giving houses stand;  
The Chief withdraws, the sacred cup is his;  
The mothers call on Kuhe as they give  
Their babies to sleep. O early slumber  
Of the heavenly company thou art indeed!  
O Ku, O Lono, O Kane, they are yours  
The evening hours (subdue  
All murmurs now, speech, voice  
Inviolable let evening be).

It is evening; it is hallowed for being that:  
Let tumult die within us all: *Tapu!*  
The spies of heaven, the stars return: *Tapu!*  
And peaceful heaven covers peaceful earth.



